

# WEBBING SEATS for chairs

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# WEBBING SEATS for chairs

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Webbing seats can be used to modernize old chairs, benches, and stools. Webbing also looks well on contemporary indoor and outdoor furniture.

## SELECT THE CHAIR

The chair on which you plan to use webbing should be sturdy, and simple in line and design. Chair seat frames should be straight, rather than noticeably curved. The front of the frame should be no more than 3 inches wider than the back so the webbing will stay in place without slipping on the side rails. The wood of the frame should be 2 to 3 inches deep to support the webbing, which is laid across the top, pulled down the side, and tacked underneath. There must be enough space between the seat and back to bring the webbing through the opening.

Webbing can be used on round seat rails as well as on flat ones. For large openings, the frame must be sturdy and the wood able to hold tacks well so the webbing can support the necessary weight. Usually, wooden chairs with small seat openings are neither comfortable nor attractive with webbing.

If webbing is to be used on the back of the chair, the wood in the cross pieces should be thick enough to take tacks without splitting.

## SELECT THE WEBBING

Webbing is available in both plastic and cotton, 2 inches wide, in a variety of colors. It can be tacked or stapled to wood.

Plastic webbing can be cleaned easily with a damp cloth and used both on indoor and outdoor furniture. Cotton webbing stays in place better than plastic webbing but is not as easy to clean, nor as satisfactory on outdoor furniture.

You can buy webbing at chair seating and craftsman's supply houses, and at certain mail-order houses and department stores.

## EQUIPMENT YOU NEED

Webbing: about 5 to 8 yards for a seat; 12 to 15 yards for the back and seat of a chair 18 inches across the front

Sharp shears

Tacks: No. 3 or No. 4, and No. 6, 1/8-lb. box of each

Tack hammer with a thin head

Stapler gun with long staples—5/16 inch: If you cannot use tacks to fasten the webbing, you may be able to borrow or rent a stapler gun from a lumberyard, or a store which does upholstery work

Masking tape or mystik tape: 3/4 inch wide, of a color to match webbing

Stiff cardboard: about 6 by 9 inches, to cut in small rectangular pieces to support the folded edge of webbing

Tack lifter or screw driver

Nail set

Pencil

Steel ruler or yardstick

Clamp clothespins, 6

## PREPARE THE CHAIR

### Modernize the chair

If you have an old dining room chair, like the oak chair in figure 1, you can remodel it easily. This chair was purchased at a second-hand store. Large blocks screwed in each corner help to make the frame sturdy.

To modernize such a chair, lift out the slip seat and discard it (figure 2).



Remove the slat in the center back, and saw the edges to make a straight board. Chisel slots on the inside of the back posts to fit this board at a height which will make the support comfortable. Insert the board in the slots. Next, remove the screws holding the crosspiece at the top, cut down the back posts, and then fasten the crosspiece on again.

To simplify the design of the chair, file projections on the claw feet of the front legs and sand them smooth.

### Refinish or paint

Remove the old finish and refinish or paint the chair. The chair in figure 2 was refinished with white paint and penetrating wood sealer to make a light grayed-oak finish.

Be sure the finish is thoroughly dry before you start to weave the seat.

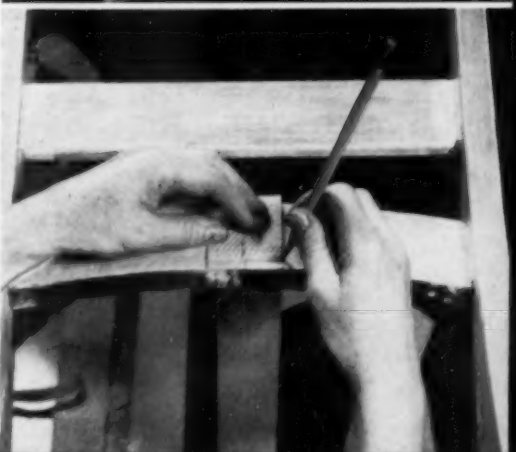
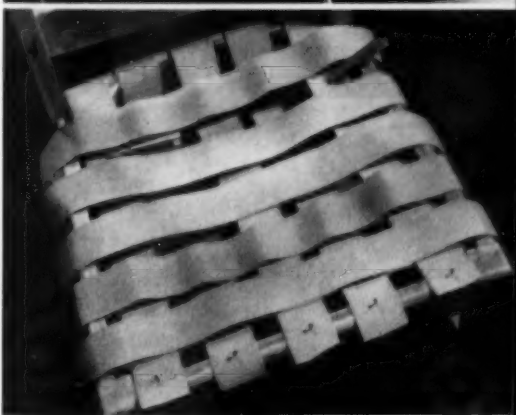
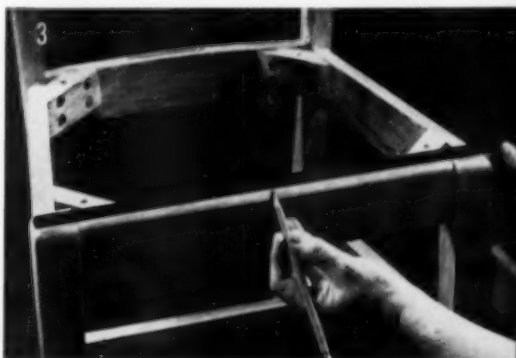
## HOW TO WEAVE

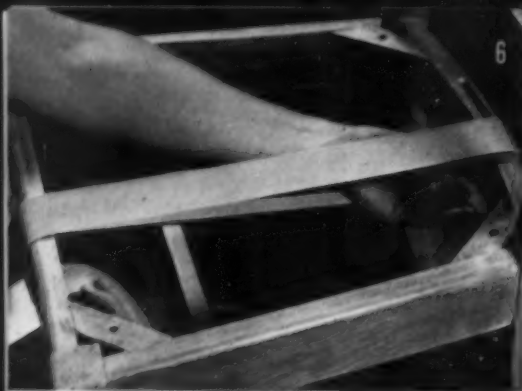
### Seats with flat rails

Measure with a stiff ruler and mark the center of the front rail (figure 3). Do the same on the other three rails.

Place short strips of webbing loosely on the chair, to plan the number of strips you will need to use each way (figure 4). As you plan, avoid the legs and the lower part of the back posts. Use tacks and clothespins to hold the webbing temporarily in place. Arrange cross-pieces to see how the mesh will look. Allow space between strips so the seat will not look solid or bulky. For the chair illustrated, five strips of plastic webbing are used each way.

Mark the right side of the webbing. Usually it is on the outside of the roll, is smoother, and has more sheen than the wrong side (figure 5).





If you do not have short lengths of webbing, you can fold a long length and estimate the number of strips.

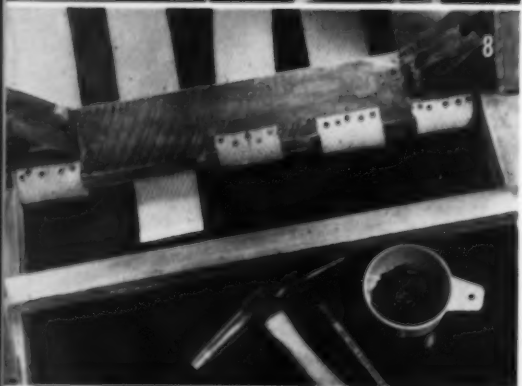
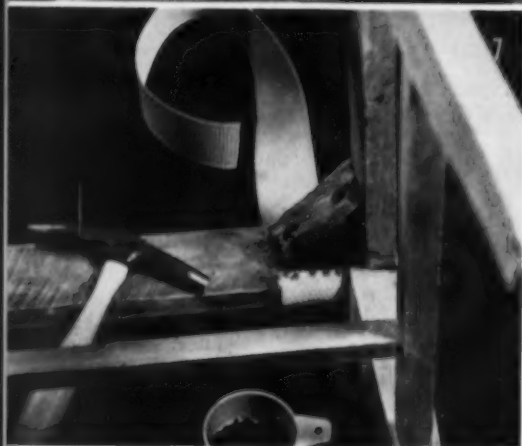
Cut the number of strips you will need back to front. Allow enough webbing for each strip to extend across the top of the seat, down the rails to the underside, or to the inside if there is room to hammer the tacks, and to turn under 1/2 inch (figure 6).

Tip the chair so you can tack easily. The place you begin tacking is determined by the shape and construction of the chair. Tack only temporarily until you are sure strips are where you want them.

Fasten strips first on the straighter of the two rails or on the one with a cross piece where you have less room to hammer. Then you can stretch the webbing and tack it on the more open rail. Since the back of this chair is curved, strips are fastened first on the front rail so they can be stretched taut from the straight edge. Fasten the webbing on the inside of the frame so that the lower edge of the front rail will look smooth rather than bumpy. Fasten the outside strips first, with the webbing close to the chair leg. Or you may find it easier to start in the center.

Put tape over the end of the strip to prevent raveling as in figure 9. Turn the end under about 1/2 inch and fasten with 5 tacks, staggered to help keep the wood from splitting (figure 7).

Tack the center strip next, or



those each side of the center if you have an even number, and then the strips between (figure 8). When you are sure strips are evenly spaced and properly placed, pound tacks all the way in.

On the curving rail at the back, tack the center strip first so you can be sure it is straight. Tape the end (figure 9).

Cut cardboard strips, one for each webbing strip, about 1/4 inch narrower than the webbing and the wood. Turn under the taped end and insert the cardboard to help make the edge smooth (figure 10).

Pull the strip taut and tack on the bottom of the seat rail since this edge shows least. Or, tack on the inside of the frame if the wood splits easily.

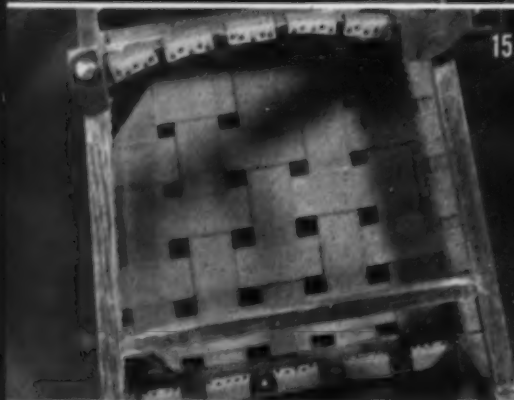
Outside strips when pulled tight across the top will be on a slant underneath the rail (figure 11). Cut the end parallel with the rail (figure 12).

Tape the end, and tack the strip temporarily in place. Do the same on the other side, then fasten strips between in the same way. Strips will be closer together on the back rail because it is shorter than the front rail. When you are sure the strips are placed correctly, tack permanently.

Measure and cut all side strips at once. (If you want to save webbing, you may find it more economical to cut each one as you work.) Fasten them together with a clamp clothespin, in the order in which you will use them from front to back (figure 13).







Weave the front strip over and under to determine how you want the design and how the mesh will best be held in place. Weave the next strip under and over, and alternate the rest.

Fasten all strips on one side. Side rails slant so ends of webbing will slant. Tape one end of each strand and tack the front strip, bringing the edge close to the front legs. Tack on the inside, if you have space, because the wood splits less; or tack on the bottom edge. Tack the back strip close to the back leg, then the center strip and those between.

Pull the strips taut and tack on the other side.

When the strips are all in place, evenly spaced and equally taut (figure 14), pound all tacks all the way in (figure 15).

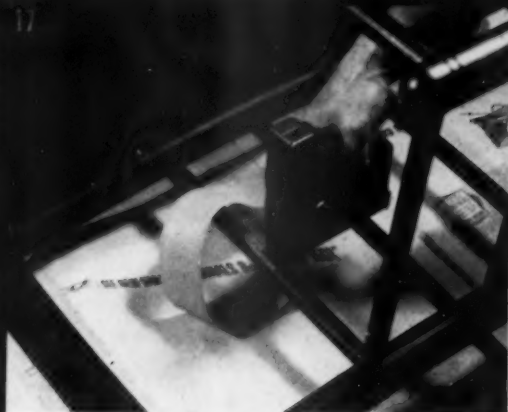
The completed chair is shown in figure 16.

### Seats with Round Rails

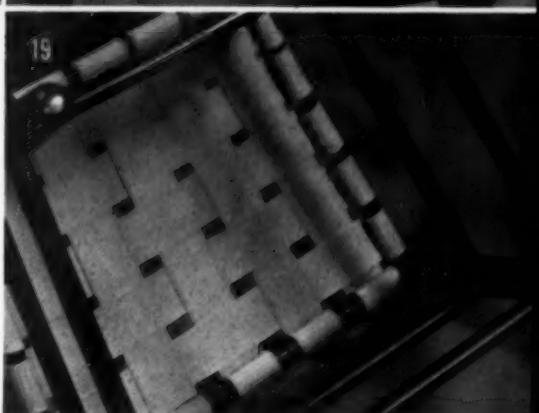
Webbing can also be used on chairs with round rails. Paint the chair or refinish with a natural finish. Be sure the chair is thoroughly dry before you weave the seat.

Mark the centers of the four rails as directed on page 5. Plan the number of strips you will use each way and cut those for back to front.





Since both back and front rails are straight on this chair, strips are first fastened to the back and stretched toward the front. The wood neither takes nor holds tacks easily, so a heavy stapler gun is used to fasten the strips (figure 17). Three 5/16-inch staples are used across the width of each strip of webbing. There is little room for cardboard strips on round rails so they are omitted. Otherwise, the chair is woven in the same way as the one with flat rails.



The top of the finished seat is shown in figure 18. Five strips of webbing are used each way. Because side rails are higher than the front and back rails, the first cross strip near the front is woven under the center strip and under the side strips, to hold it in place. Compare this with figure 14 where the seat frame is flat and weaving is reversed.

On the underside (figure 19), bring strips as far around the rails as you can reach with the stapler.

The completed chair is shown in figure 20.



## Backs of Chairs

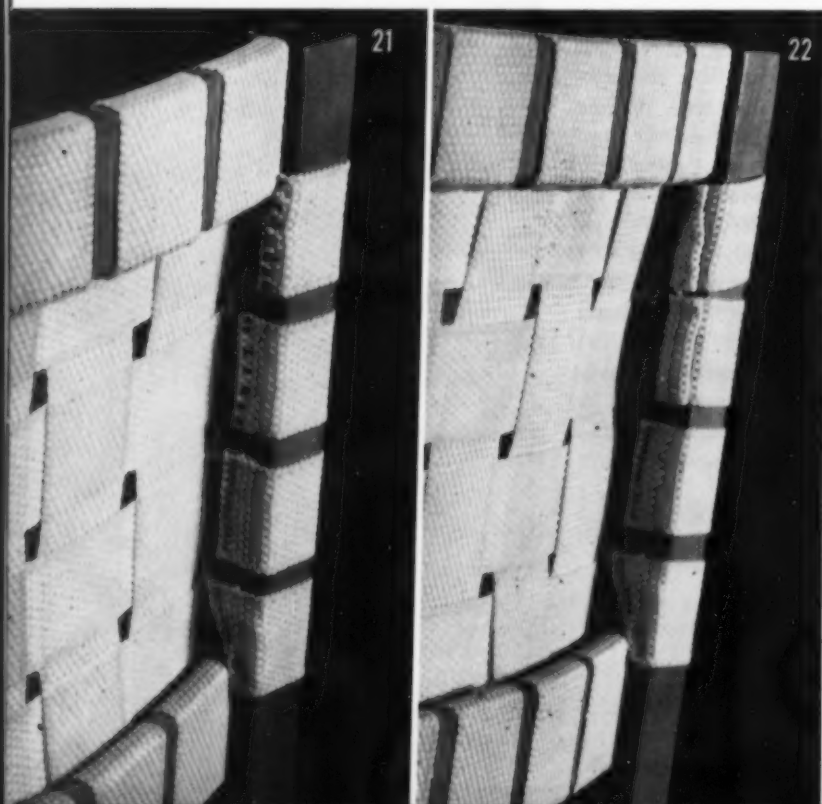
Webbing also may be used for backs of chairs. Mark centers, and plan and cut strips as for seats. Allow enough length so the laced webbing will shape to the back of the person as well as to the back of the chair. Strips are first fastened up and down; then other strips are woven from side to side.

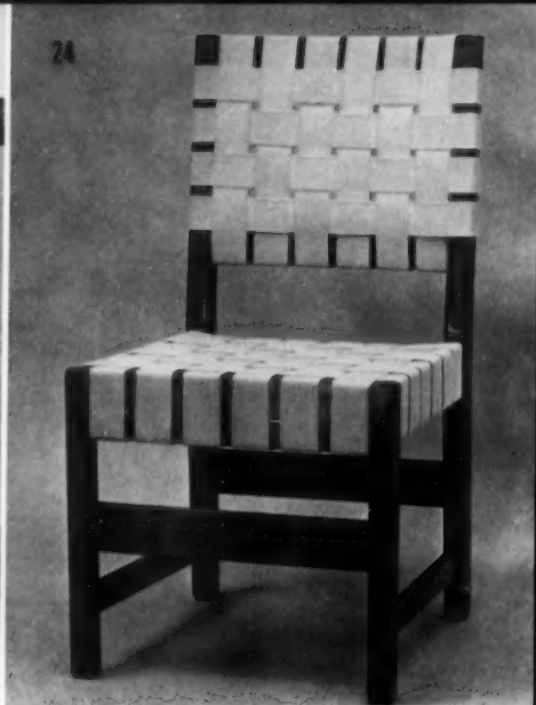
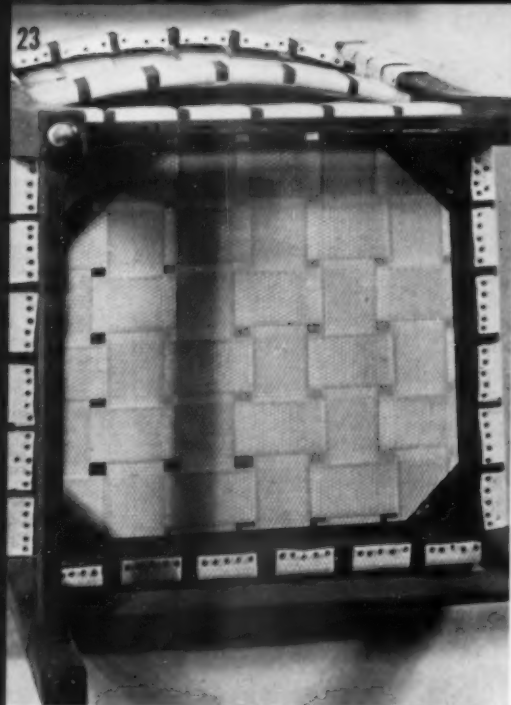
Tack the end of the strip first on the front of the lower crosspiece. Then pull the strip over the top of the crosspiece, down the back, under the crosspiece, and then up the back of the chair and over the top crosspiece, tacking the end on the underside.

The tacking of both ends of side-to-side strips is more difficult to conceal. Figure 21 shows tacks fastening the upper two strips. The two lower strips are stapled to the chair and are less conspicuous than tacks.

In figure 22, two fastenings are covered by folds of webbing. Weave strips first. About 2 inches in from one end, tack near the front of the post. Turn the end under and insert a strip of cardboard. Use three 3/4-inch wire brads to hold this fold. The top of these brads can be concealed by forcing apart the mesh of the webbing. The cardboard prevents the brads from going all the way through and also keeps the edge of the fold smooth.

Fasten the other end of the strip to the opposite post in a similar way. The underside of the same chair is shown in figure 23. The seat is sturdy





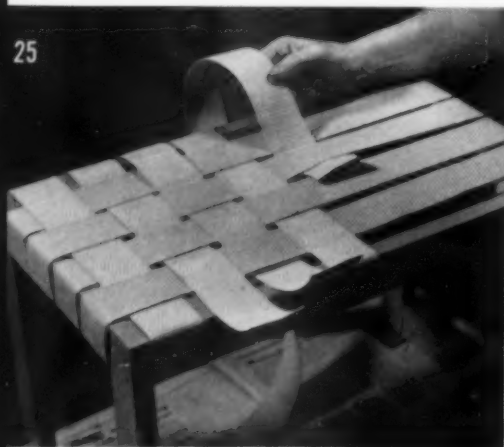
because the chair has deep seat rails and the webbing has been securely tacked.

The completed chair is shown in figure 24. The webbing is taut enough to look trim but slack enough to be comfortable. Plastic webbing is easy to clean.

### **Benches and Stools**

Webbing also can be used on benches and stools. First, tack the strips across the long way; then weave the rest across the short way (figure 25).

A completed bench is shown in figure 26.



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